

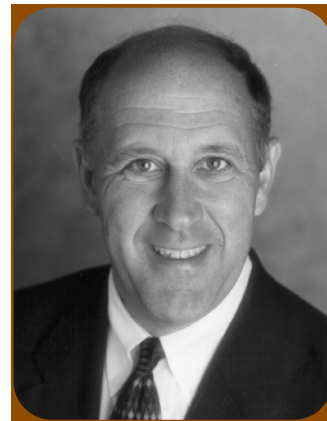


FORWARD



To my fellow citizens:

On June 17, 2005, Wisconsin celebrates the centennial anniversary of its civil service law. Simply put, this law requires that Wisconsin state government hire its employees based on their demonstrated qualifications for the job. Back in 1905, Governor Robert M. La Follette signed one of the nation's first civil service bills into law. Motivated by a desire to address a culture of political patronage in government hiring that existed not only in Wisconsin but across the nation, Wisconsin's original civil service law was expansive in its scope and rigid in its requirements.



Over the years, Wisconsin's governors and legislators have maintained that early commitment to merit-based hiring of permanent employees while making dramatic improvements to infuse the system with more accountability to the general public, more access to employment for historically disadvantaged groups, and more flexibility to speed the hiring process while preserving the fundamental principle of selection based on demonstrated qualification for the job. Today, Wisconsin ranks high among the states for its sound, effective, and responsive human resources management practices.

The centennial of Wisconsin's civil service system presents an ideal opportunity to recognize not only the strong tradition of our law, but also the substantial contributions made by thousands of state employees who have served and continue to serve the citizens of Wisconsin. Please join me in recognizing the important role that civil service has made in ensuring effective, responsive government for all Wisconsin residents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jim Doyle".

Jim Doyle, Governor
State of Wisconsin

"The best shall serve the state"



PREFACE

Thank you for your interest in the 100th anniversary of the civil service system in Wisconsin state government. The Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) created this book to honor this moment in state government history, to recognize the contributions of the dedicated public servants who have worked as state employees over the years, and to acknowledge those who had specific involvement in creating, maintaining, protecting, and enhancing the civil service system itself. This publication was made possible in part through generous financial contributions from AFSCME Council 24 – Wisconsin State Employees Union, and the Wisconsin Education Association Council – State Professional Education and Information Council #1. My thanks to them for their support of this effort.

From its humble beginnings with roughly 1,400 classified employees in 38 job titles, the state civil service has evolved considerably over the past 100 years and now includes over 40,000 civil service employees in more than 1,800 unique classifications. State employees work hard every day to make Wisconsin a great place to live, work, and visit. It is no exaggeration to say that state employees' work touches the lives of every Wisconsin citizen.

In light of the important work that state employees do, it should be no surprise that succeeding generations of government leaders have maintained Governor Robert M. La Follette's essential philosophy that all citizens should have an equal opportunity to serve the public, and that they should be evaluated on the basis of their demonstrated ability to do the jobs they seek. Nevertheless, many states have departed from these core principles over the years in the name of making state government hiring more flexible and competitive. Wisconsin's leaders, by contrast, have chosen to preserve the core principles of merit hiring and just cause removal while continually striving for the flexibility needed to attract and retain high quality employees. This wise stewardship is indeed worth celebrating.

The civil service system has withstood the test of time, even in the face of today's challenges. As the state workforce expands in some areas and contracts in others to meet state government's priorities, operational needs, and fiscal limitations, the civil service system provides an orderly framework for ensuring that we provide employment opportunities fairly to our current employees and preserve the valuable institutional knowledge of our experienced staff. To make the most of limited resources, we are working to improve the coordination of human resources management across state government and to further streamline and automate civil service procedures, all within the framework that has served the state well for 100 years.

The wise stewardship we celebrate in this publication also positions us to meet tomorrow's challenges. The demographics of both the civil service workforce and the general labor force are changing rapidly. State government will soon be faced with replacing large numbers of retiring employees from a pool of potential job applicants that is both smaller and more diverse. Governor Doyle has asked agencies, under the direction of OSER, to engage in comprehensive workforce planning so that state government can continue to deliver essential services in an increasingly competitive labor environment. By identifying state government's needs in recruitment, hiring, classification, compensation, and training, we can meet future workforce challenges using the tools of the civil service system.

The original slogan of the civil service was "The Best Shall Serve the State." The people of Wisconsin deserve no less from their state government over the next 100 years.

—Karen E. Timberlake, Director
Office of State Employment Relations